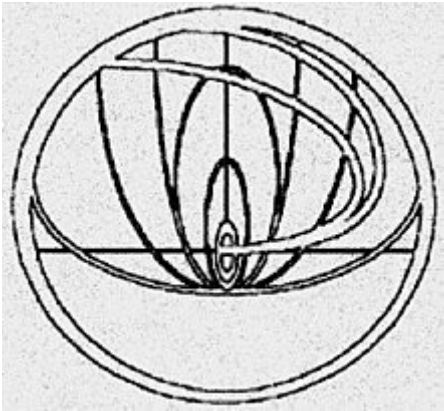
John Titor

John Titor is a name used on several bulletin boards during 2000 and 2001 by a poster claiming to be an American military time traveler from 2036.[1][2] Titor made numerous vague and specific predictions regarding calamitous events in 2004 and beyond, including a nuclear war, none of which came true. Subsequent closer examination of Titor's assertions provoked widespread skepticism. Inconsistencies in his explanations, the uniform inaccuracy of his predictions, and a private investigator's findings all led to the general impression that the entire episode was an elaborate hoax. A 2009 investigation concluded that Titor was likely the creation of Larry Haber, a Florida entertainment lawyer, along with his brother Morey, a computer scientist.[3]

John Titor



John Titor's purported military insignia

Information	
Full name	John
Alias	Time Traveler
Nickname	Titor
Occupation	Alleged time traveler Soldier
Nationality	American

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Titor's posts

The first posts using John Titor's military symbol appeared on the *Time Travel Institute* forums on November 2, 2000, under the name *TimeTravel_0*.[4] At that time the name "John Titor" was not being used. The posts discussed time travel in general, the first one being the "six parts" description of what a time machine would need to have to work (see below) and responses to questions about how such a machine would work. Early messages tended to be short. A second thread was also made due to shortcomings in the forum software at the time.[5]

The name "John Titor" was not introduced until January 2001, when TimeTravel_0 began posting at the Art Bell BBS Forums (which required a name or pseudonym for every account). The Titor posts ended in late March 2001.

Around 2003, various websites reproduced Titor's posts, re-arranging them into narratives. Not all refer to the original dates posted.[6]

In his online postings, Titor claimed to be an American soldier from 2036, based in Tampa, Florida. He was assigned to a governmental time-travel project, and sent back to 1975 to retrieve an IBM 5100 computer, which he said was needed to debug various legacy computer programs in 2036 – a possible reference to the UNIX year 2038 problem.[3] The IBM 5100 runs the APL and BASIC programming languages.

IBM 5100 computer

Titor said he had been selected for this mission specifically, given that his paternal grandfather was directly involved with the assembly and programming of the 5100.[7] In support of this, he described unpublicized features of the 5100, leading to

assumptions that a computer scientist was behind the postings.[3] Titor claimed to be on a stopover in the year 2000 for "personal reasons",[3] to collect pictures lost in the (future) civil war and to visit his family, of whom he spoke often.

Titor also said he had been, for a few months, trying to alert anyone that would listen about the threat of Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease spread through beef products and about the possibility of civil war within the United States. When questioned about them by an online subscriber, Titor also expressed an interest in mysteries such as UFOs, which remained unexplained in his time. Titor suggested that UFOs and extraterrestrials might be travelers from much further into the future than his own time, with superior time machines.

Time machine

Titor described his time machine on several occasions. In an early post, he described it as a "stationary mass, temporal displacement unit powered by two top-spin, dual positive singularities", producing a "standard 6-foot Tipler sinusoid".[3]

The earliest post was more explicit, saying it contained the following:

- Two magnetic housing units for the dual micro singularities
- An electron injection manifold to alter mass and gravity of the micro singularities
- A cooling and X-ray venting system
- Gravity sensors, or a variable gravity lock
- Four main cesium clocks
- Three main computer units

According to the posts, the device was installed in the rear of a 1967 Chevrolet Corvette convertible[8] and later mentioned a 1987 truck having four-wheel drive.[3]

Predictions

Although invoking the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics, whereby events from his timeline may differ from our own, Titor also expressed assurance that the differences were minimal. As such, his descriptions have been interpreted as predictions and compared with historical events since 2001.

The most immediate of Titor's predictions was of an upcoming civil war in the United States having to do with "order and rights".[9] He described it as beginning in 2004,[10] with civil unrest surrounding the presidential election of that year. This civil conflict that he characterized as "having a Waco type event every month that steadily gets worse"[10] would be "pretty much at everyone's doorstep"[9] and erupt by 2008.

As a result of the war, the United States would split into five regions based on various factors and differing military objectives. This civil war, according to Titor, would end in 2015 with a brief but intense World War III.

Titor refers to the exchange as "N Day". Washington, D.C. and Jacksonville, Florida are specifically mentioned as being hit. After the war, Omaha, Nebraska would be the new U.S. capital. Titor was vague as to the exact motivations and causes for World War III. At one point, he characterized the hostilities as being led by "border clashes and overpopulation".[11] He also pointed to the contemporary conflict between Arabs and Israel as not a cause, but rather a milestone that precedes a World War III.

Titor claimed that as a 13-year-old in 2011, he joined the Fighting Diamondbacks, a shotgun infantry unit in Florida, for at least four years. In other posts, he described himself as hiding from the war.

Titor claimed that the "Everett–Wheeler model of quantum physics", better known as the many-worlds interpretation, was correct. According to Titor, this caused a new timestream to form because of his time travel. This gives his predictions the ability to stand up to scrutiny when they fail to pass, since believers can say that the events were averted by Titor's postings.[3]

Criticism and discussion

The New Republic called Titor the most famous of several internet forum posters who claimed to be time travelers.[8]

An Italian television program, *Voyager – Ai confini della conoscenza*, aired the results of an investigation of John Titor on May 19, 2008. Private investigator Mike Lynch found no registry evidence, past or present, of any individual named John Titor. He did, however, identify the John Titor Foundation, a for-profit company formed on September 16, 2003, with no office or address other than a rented post box in Kissimmee, Florida. An IP address connected with Titor also geolocated to Kissimmee.[12]

In 2009, a report by John Hughston of the Hoax Hunter website named Larry Haber, a Florida entertainment lawyer, as the CEO of the foundation.[13][14] Lynch concluded that Haber and his brother Morey Haber, a computer scientist, were very likely the men behind John Titor, whom they actually introduced in 1998, accompanied by different predictions, including chaos due to the Y2K "bug".[3] John Hughston also reported that John Titor is a registered trademark with the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

In 2018, multimedia artist Joseph Matheny, creator of the alternate reality game Ong's Hat[15] said he worked as a consultant for unnamed individuals responsible for the legend. John Titor "is a story that was created as a literary experiment by people who were observing what I was doing with Ong's Hat and these people wanted to do something like that. I was a consultant on the project, [but] it wasn't my project."[16]

In popular culture

- In 2004, the John Titor Foundation published a book, *John Titor: A Time Traveler's Tale* (ISBN 1-59196-436-9), discussing his claims; the book is now out of print.
- In 2004, *Time Traveler Zero*, a play based on the John Titor story, was staged in the United States.[17]
- The 2009 visual novel *Steins;Gate*, which was adapted into an anime in 2011, includes references to John Titor.[18]
- Titor is briefly mentioned in Graham McNeil's Warhammer 40,000 novel *The Crimson King*.
- In an issue of *The Unbeatable Squirrel Girl*, John Titor is listed in the *Deadpool's Guide to Super Villains* card set as an alias of Kang the Conqueror.[19]

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External links

- The original John Titor thread on Time Travel Institute
- John Titor's second thread on Time Travel Institute
- John Titor: a Time Traveller From The Year 2036?
- Is John Titor an upcoming Disney franchise?

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